

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT



Application No. 12682, of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, pursuant to Sub-section 8207.2 of the Zoning Regulations, for a special exception under Paragraph 4101.42 to permit an addition to an office building in the SP District at the premises 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., (Square 157, Lot 112).

HEARING DATE: June 28, 1978

DECISION DATE: June 28, 1978 (Bench Decision)

FINDINGS OF FACT:

1. The subject property is located in an SP District at the northwest corner of Massachusetts Avenue, and 18th Street, N.W. The property also fronts on P Street, N.W.
2. The applicant proposes to use the subject property as the National Headquarters for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, a non-profit organization.
3. Adjacent to the property to the east are the offices of the Brookings Institution. Diagonally across the street is a new office building under construction. Directly across Massachusetts Avenue is a clinic and another office building. Across 18th Street to the west is a private club.
4. The subject building has a gross floor area of approximately 61,000 square feet, and consists of five stories and a cellar, with principal elevations on three streets.
5. The subject lot contains approximately 13,031.62 square feet in area.
6. Originally the subject premises was constructed for residential use to contain one apartment on each floor. However, it was converted to office use in the early 1940's and has remained in office use since that time.
7. The building is of historic significance by virtue of its architectural style and is listed as a Category II Landmark in the National Register of Historic Places. The building is also within a historic district.

8. The building was purchased by the applicant in 1977, and the applicant is in the process of making alterations to the building to make it more efficient and restore its character. The applicant proposes to construct a new service entrance in the existing light court facing the alley between Massachusetts Avenue and P Street, N.W. A new stair will be constructed in the existing vent shaft and a new stair enclosure and cooling tower screen will be constructed on the roof. A new air conditioning system will be provided to replace the window units that were visually distracting from the ornamental facade of the building. An entrance ramp for the handicapped will be provided on the 18th Street side of the building. These additions, which require BZA approval, are all intended to supplement and enhance the existing office use of the property.

9. The proposed alterations to the building will result in an increase of 1,131 square feet in the existing floor area and bring the total to 59,923 square feet. The total floor area after the proposed addition will remain well within the 5.5 FAR as permitted in an SP District.

10. No changes will be made on the street facades other than necessary repair work, removal of the window air conditioning units, restoration of the wood casement windows to their original appearance and the creation of a ramp for access by the handicapped.

11. There will be three additions to the roof. The first is an extension of the new fire stair to serve the existing penthouse. The walls of this enclosure will be contiguous with the penthouse and will match it in material and height. The second is a louvered screen around the cooling tower to screen it from view. And the third is a solar collector to heat the domestic hot water system.

12. The addition proposed will not increase the capacity of the building and will not result in the generation of additional traffic.

13. The Municipal Planning Office, by report dated June 23, 1978, recommended that the application be approved on the grounds that the proposed renovation will provide an improved working environment and help preserve the historic character of the building. The Board so finds.

14. The Department of Transportation, by report dated May 5, 1978, stated that their review of the application revealed that no adverse impacts were identified. The Board concurs.

15. There was no report from Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2B on this application.

16. There was no opposition to the granting of this application.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND OPINION:

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact and the evidence of record, the Board concludes that the nature and shape of the proposed addition will not add to the capacity of the building and will thus not create any dangerous or other objectionable traffic conditions. The Board concludes that the use of the addition is in harmony with the existing use of the building, and will also be in harmony with adjoining and neighboring properties. The Board further concludes that the proposed additions are minimal and are necessary for the preservation and use of this building. It is therefore ORDERED that this application is hereby GRANTED.

VOTE: (Charles R. Norris, Chloethiel Woodard Smith, William F. McIntosh to GRANT, Leonard L. McCants not present, not voting).

BY ORDER OF THE D.C. BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT

ATTESTED BY:



STEVEN E. SHER
Executive Director

FINAL DATE OF ORDER: 7 JUL 1978

THAT THE ORDER OF THE BOARD IS VALID FOR A PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS ONLY UNLESS APPLICATION FOR A BUILDING AND/OR OCCUPANCY PERMIT IS FILED WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WITHIN A PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS AFTER THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS ORDER.